

National University of Singapore
School of Computing
CS1010S: Programming Methodology
Semester I, 2018/2019

Tutorial 10
Memoization & Dynamic Programming

Dynamic Programming and Memoization

1. Consider the following function:

$$f(n) = \begin{cases} n/2 & \text{if } \text{even}(n) \\ 3n + 1 & \text{if } \text{odd}(n) \end{cases}$$

The Collatz conjecture states that for any integer n , the sequence $n, f(n), f(f(n)), \dots$ will eventually reach 1.

We define the Collatz distance for an integer n as the number of steps needed to reach 1.

- (a) Write a function `collatz_distance(n)`.

```
>>> collatz_distance(1)
0
>>> collatz_distance(4)
2
>>> collatz_distance(27)
111
```

- (b) Write a function `max_collatz_distance(n)`, which computes the maximum Collatz distance of 1, 2, 3, ..., n .

```
>>> max_collatz_distance(6)
8
>>> max_collatz_distance(8)
16
>>> max_collatz_distance(18)
20
```

- (c) Give a memoized version of `max_collatz_distance_memo(n)` using `memoize` as provided in the lecture.
- (d) Memoize it without using the function provided in the lecture. You should be able to do better.

Exception Handling

2. The following function accesses a URL on the internet and retrieves its contents:

```
from urllib.request import urlopen
from urllib.parse import urlsplit
from urllib.error import *
def httpget(url):
    parsed = urlsplit(url)
    if not parsed.scheme: #protocol insertion
        url = 'http://' + url
    elif parsed.scheme != 'http':
        raise ValueError("Unknown protocol")
    return urlopen(url).read()
```

- (a) Your ability to access a URL on the internet is not guaranteed - it is only on a “best effort” basis. An example of an URL is *http://www.nus.edu.sg/*. Describe qualitatively (no need for exact exceptions/error codes) some of the things that could go wrong.
- (b) Why is it a good idea to raise an error instead of simply returning a string ‘Not Found’ or an empty string to indicate that the URL is not accessible?
- (c) Suppose we are interested in 3 types of errors: user errors, internet errors and all other errors. A user error might be a mistyped URL while a internet error may be a connection problem.

For user errors, we try to catch `URLError` and rethrow¹ it as `ValueError`. For internet error, we try to catch `HTTPError` and rethrow it as custom error type `InternetFail`. For other errors, just rethrow.

Modify `httpget` to accomodate the above error handling.

Note: `HTTPError` is a subclass of `URLError`, hence the order is important. We want to handle the more specific error first.

¹When we catch an exception and raise it again, we are *rethrowing* that error.

- (d) Using the above, write a function `download_URLs(URL_filenames)` to download a set of files, where `URL_filenames` is a list of pairs in the following format: `[[URL1, filename1], [URL2, filename2], ...]`. In this instance, the contents of `URL1` should be saved locally as `filename1`.

Naturally, many errors can occur during downloading - if we get `InternetFail` or `ValueError`, we want to ignore those and continue downloading the rest of the list. Otherwise, we rethrow the error.

Hint: To save data to a file, use the following:

```
with open(filename, 'wb') as myFile:  
    myFile.write(contents)
```